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## A STUDY OF PRESIDENTIAL VOTES.

THE occurrence of a presidential election in the same year with a national census offers an opportunity for gauging, with reasonable accuracy, the interest taken in the exercise of the suffrage. There have been encouraging indications in recent years that this interest was increasing and that a better understanding of the duties of citizenship in a free government was being gained. If further proof of this was given by the election of 1900, the fact should be made clear, in order that a record of the advance may be made for future guidance. And if no such encouraging signs are evident, it is still more important that the situation be studied, so that the causes of any lack of interest in the suffrage may be made known and a remedy, if possible, prescribed.

A brief glance at past presidential elections is necessary to an understanding of the recent election and of the lessons to be drawn from it. The table on the next page,<sup>1</sup> which contains the vote cast at each presidential election since and including 1824, the increase over the previous election and the percentage of increase, will help to such an understanding.

A glance at this table reveals the fact that the law of undulations governs in politics, as well as elsewhere. The tide of votes has ebbed and flowed like the waters of the ocean. There have been years when popular enthusiasm has rolled a wave of votes far up on the political beach ; but this high tide has been invariably followed by an ebb, when a wide margin has been left on the political sands to measure the subsidence in public interest. The fact that the poll of votes has increased, even when the tide has ebbed, does not invalidate this statement ;

<sup>1</sup> No two compilations of the votes cast at the presidential election of 1900 agree. This is due to the fact that in collecting the returns more or less care is taken to include the vote cast for minor candidates. In this article the table which appears to be the most complete and accurate is used.

TABLE I.

YEAR.	VOTE.	INCREASE.	INCREASE PER CENT.
1824 . . . . .	351,562		
1828 . . . . .	1,156,328	804,766	
1832 . . . . .	1,250,799	94,471	8.0
1836 . . . . .	1,498,205	247,406	19.0
1840 . . . . .	2,410,778	912,573	60.9
1844 . . . . .	2,698,611	287,833	11.9
1848 . . . . .	2,871,908	173,297	6.4
1852 . . . . .	3,139,869	267,961	9.3
1856 . . . . .	4,053,971	914,102	29.1
1860 . . . . .	4,676,853	622,882	15.3
1864 . . . . .	4,024,892	- 651,961	13.9
1868 . . . . .	5,724,686	1,699,784	42.2
1872 . . . . .	6,466,155	741,469	11.0
1876 . . . . .	8,412,733	1,946,578	30.1
1880 . . . . .	9,209,406	796,673	9.4
1884 . . . . .	10,045,085	835,679	9.0
1888 . . . . .	11,380,860	1,334,975	13.2
1892 . . . . .	12,059,351	678,491	11.7
1896 . . . . .	13,923,102	1,863,751	15.4
1900 . . . . .	14,075,445	151,675	1.0

for the increase has invariably been less than the growth of population has authorized. It is instructive to note the undulations of this wave and to discover, if possible, the causes which govern its action.

No record of the vote cast in the first nine presidential elections is accessible. There was, in fact, no such vote. The choice of presidential electors was made, for the most part, by the state legislatures, and the members of these bodies were often chosen from one to three years before the time came to elect a president. Even in 1824 the electors were chosen by the legislatures in six of the twenty-four states, including the most populous, New York. Comparisons based on the recorded popular vote at this election are, therefore, of little significance. But by 1828 only two small states, Delaware and South Carolina, still retained the old method of choice, and from 1832 to the Civil War the choice was by popular vote in all but South

Carolina. With the election of 1828, therefore, the figures and comparisons become substantially accurate for our purpose. In 1824 there was an ebb tide in the popular vote. Many irksome restrictions rested upon the exercise of the suffrage then, and the voters were scattered over a comparatively wide area, with the facilities for reaching the polls few and primitive. But these causes alone do not account for the smallness of the vote. The real reason was a lack of popular interest in the suffrage. The people had not yet awakened to an adequate apprehension of their rights and privileges at the ballot box, and consequently the great body of voters remained indifferent.

But a new impulse was coming. It was occasioned by a breaking away from class rule and a lessening respect among the masses for wealth and family influence in politics. A weakening of these forces, with general suffrage prevailing, was inevitable in time. That the new order of things came in so impetuous and turbulent a manner as it did was due to the presence of a strong and impulsive leader. The result of the election of 1824 supplied the conditions. The failure of either candidate to secure a majority in the electoral college, and the choice by the House of Representatives of the candidate having the smaller number of votes, caused profound popular discontent. This feeling was shrewdly manipulated in the interest of General Jackson and the Democratic party. A bitter and acrimonious discussion was begun and kept up for four years. The prejudices and passions of the voters were worked on until an intense and widespread interest in politics was aroused. The consequence was seen in the presidential election of 1828, when the popular enthusiasm rolled a great wave of votes into the ballot boxes. The poll reached 1,156,328, not more than half as large as the same population would cast to-day, but an enormous increase over the poll in 1824. For the states in which comparison is possible the excess was over 130 per cent. This can be appropriately called the "Jacksonian wave."

It exhausted its force, however, in electing Jackson; and when it receded, it left an ebb tide which lasted for twelve years. The people had asserted their power and satisfied their

desire to rectify the fancied wrong done them in the presidential election of 1824. A further stimulus was lacking, and added to this was the timorousness which always follows an incursion into an untried field. The people hesitated and awaited results. But no popular enthusiasm was needed to reelect President Jackson. The impulse he had given the party was enough to carry it successfully through the presidential elections of 1832 and 1836. In the former year the vote increased only 94,471, or less than half what the growth in population authorized, and in the latter year the increase was 247,406. The total vote had now reached 1,498,205, in a population of about 14,500,000 in the states, excluding slaves, or one vote to a little less than each ten of population. As this is only about half the present ratio, it is evident, notwithstanding the comparatively high tide of 1828, that popular interest in the suffrage had not yet been fully aroused.

But events were preparing another upheaval. The money panics which began early in the administration of President Van Buren, causing profound business depression and widespread bankruptcy, arrested the attention of the country to an unusual degree. The Whig campaign began the day Mr. Van Buren was inaugurated, in 1837, and continued until the last vote was polled in November, 1840. Every means was employed that could appeal to the emotions and awaken the enthusiasm of the people. For lack of a better name, this may be called the "log cabin" wave, and its immediate result was an increase of 912,573 in the number of votes cast, raising the total poll to 2,410,778. This second high political tide receded as quickly as it came. The early death of President Harrison and the policy of President Tyler demoralized the Whig party and the popular enthusiasm vanished. No other great wave breaking on the political beach has left so few enduring traces of its presence as this "log cabin" wave. There was no great leader to make its effects permanent. Three presidential elections passed while the tide was at an ebb. Some questions of great national importance, such as the annexation of Texas and the Mexican War, were presented for decision; but, while much

interest was manifested in the campaigns, the vote showed no marked increase. The great reservoir of enthusiasm upon which the country drew in such years as 1828 and 1840 had to be refilled before another impulse could be given to the popular vote. As a consequence of this lack of enthusiasm, the total increase in the poll of votes in the three presidential elections of 1844, 1848 and 1852 was only 729,091, or about four-fifths of the increase in the single election of 1840. And in the meantime the population of the country had grown about 7,000,000, making possible an increase of at least 1,400,000 in the vote.

But this popular indifference was not to last. Notwithstanding the apparent apathy, public opinion was slowly preparing to decide one of the most momentous questions that has agitated American politics. This was the slavery question; and when the necessary force had accumulated, it needed only an impulse to start an undulation which was to roll the wave of votes higher than any preceding wave. The impulse and the opportunity came in 1856, when 4,053,971 votes were polled for president, an increase of 914,102 over the previous presidential poll. This can be appropriately called the "anti-slavery" wave, and it marked the entrance into politics of the great middle class—a class which still remains the dominating force in directing the policy of the government. This wave did not recede so rapidly as previous undulations, but maintained much of its volume and added 622,822 more votes to the total poll in 1860, a larger increase than had been made in any previous presidential election held in years of an ebb tide.

The sixteen years following 1860 form a hiatus in American politics. The war for the Union and the conditions growing out of it changed the situation so radically that exact comparisons are impossible. It is necessary to wait until disturbing factors are eliminated and normal conditions have returned. At the presidential election of 1864 eleven states did not vote and the poll fell 651,961 below the total of 1860. The great increase of 1,699,784 in the poll of 1868 cannot be counted as

a tidal wave. The increase was, in fact, less than the circumstances justified. It was only 1,047,833 more votes than were cast in 1860, an average increase for the two current presidential elections of a little more than half a million votes each. It must be remembered, also, that nearly 1,000,000 colored men in the South had meanwhile been given the suffrage and that all the states, with three exceptions only, participated in a presidential election for the first time in eight years. The conditions prevailing in the election of 1872 were still abnormal. Thousands of white voters in the South either were disfranchised or voluntarily held aloof. The increase of 741,469 was due almost wholly to the fact that Mississippi, Texas and Virginia took part in the election of a president for the first time in twelve years.

The next upheaval came in 1876, when the largest actual increase in the vote made at any presidential election appeared. It is more difficult to give a name to this wave than to any wave which has left its record on American politics. There was no one dominating cause. Several influences worked together to bring it about. One was the natural reaction against a party long in power; another was the belief that sectional prejudices and passions had been shrewdly manipulated to cover up corruptions and incompetence in office; and a third was the profound dissatisfaction with business conditions — a dissatisfaction bred by the collapse of schemes which the inflation of the currency had forced beyond their natural growth. There was also a Democratic party, well led and well organized, for the first time in twenty years, to take advantage of these favorable conditions. But no great popular excitement was manifested in the campaign and no great tidal wave of votes was expected. It came, however, and left 8,412,733 ballots in the boxes, an increase of 1,946,578 over the poll of 1872. This increase is the more remarkable, as this was the first presidential election in which systematic efforts were made to suppress the colored vote in the South, which must have materially reduced the vote in that section. The great impulse of 1876 exhausted itself in one effort and the natural

reaction followed. The campaigns of 1880 and 1884 were apparently more exciting than that of 1876, but the increase in the vote of both of them together did not equal the increase in the vote of 1876 alone. The total poll in 1884 reached 10,045,085, an enormous number of ballots to cast and count in one day.

Another undulation was due in 1888. In the campaign of that year the protectionists made a supreme effort to recover the presidency, knowing that, if the defeat of 1884 was repeated, the current of legislation would set strongly in opposition to their favorite economic policy and that it would take many years to recover the ground thus lost. The Democrats, too, had tasted the sweets of power for the first time in a quarter of a century and exerted themselves to the utmost to retain their hold on the government. Both parties were thoroughly organized and the reserve vote was called out. The consequence was an addition of 1,334,975 to the vote and a total poll of 11,380,860. But the popular interest vanished almost as quickly as the vote was declared. The public assumed a critical attitude, questioning the justness of the verdict it had given. The result of this disposition of the people was seen in 1892, when another presidential election came around. The party in power was changed, but not by a tidal wave. Only 678,491 votes were added to the poll of 1888, the smallest increase made in any presidential election since 1864. It was more by the abstention than by the increase of voters that the result was achieved. But while the ebb of the 1888 wave was rapid, it did not recede far, and it returned more quickly than any previous undulation. The wave of 1896 can be appropriately called the anti-free-silver wave, and the height to which it rose was indicative not only of the desire of the nation for a stable currency but of regret for the verdict of 1892. The increase in the vote was 1,863,839, the second largest increase on record, and the total poll reached 13,923,102.

From this review it appears that since 1824 there have been six great tidal waves in American political history, that these undulations have occurred in 1828, in 1840, in 1856, in 1876,



in 1888 and in 1896, and that the interval between them has lasted from eight to sixteen years. Three of these waves — those which happened in 1840, in 1876 and in 1896 — have been almost wholly the result of disastrous business conditions. The other three waves were protests — that of 1828 against the electoral wrong of 1824, that of 1856 against the slave power and that of 1888 against a threatened economic change. It is now possible to study the results of the latest presidential election with profit and to determine the comparative interest shown in the exercise of the suffrage. Since the presidential vote began to be compiled, four national elections have occurred in the same year with United States censuses — namely, in 1840, 1860, 1880 and 1900. The figures prove that in the first of these years the percentage of actual voters to population was 16.9, in the second year it was 17 and in the third year 18.6. The increase, then, in the percentage of voters to population in the forty years between 1840 and 1880 was 1.7, or an average increase of .85 per cent for each of the twenty-year periods, 1840–1860 and 1860–1880. Had this average increase in the percentage of voters to population appeared again at the end of the next twenty-year period, in the election of 1900, the percentage of actual voters to population would have been about 19.45. The population of the forty-five states participating in the election was given by the recent census as 74,610,523; and 19.45 per cent of this is 14,511,746, the number who should have voted, had the increased percentage in actual voters appeared. As a matter of fact, however, only 14,075,445 votes were cast, or 436,301 below the expected increase. The percentage of voters to population stood, therefore, at 18.86, or very nearly where it was in 1880. A knowledge of the particular states in which an increase or a falling off in the vote occurred may aid in the search for an explanation.

The following table gives for each state the population, the potential vote, the actual vote and the percentage which the actual vote bears to the population and to the potential vote. The potential vote is obtained by taking the census of 1890

as a basis, the compilation of the census of 1900 not having advanced far enough to give the number of voters in the country. The potential voters of each state in 1890 may be assumed to be the whole number of native-born males twenty-one years of age and over, plus the whole number of naturalized foreign-born males twenty-one years of age and over. A division of the total population of each state by the sum of the native-born and naturalized voters gives the ratio of potential voters to population in that state in 1890. This ratio, when applied to the returns of the census of 1900, gives approximately the potential vote in each state last year. This potential vote, of course, includes the indifferent voters, the sick, those incapacitated for various reasons, those absent from home and those disfranchised by law or by fraud. But it would be a confusing task to make an estimate of all these. For purposes of comparison the whole number of potential voters must be taken as a basis, as in the table on the following page.

A glance at the table shows a wide variation in the ratio of actual voters to population. The percentage is highest, of course, in states where woman suffrage prevails. Leaving these out, Indiana and Montana have the highest percentage, and South Carolina and Mississippi the lowest. The percentage is also higher in some groups of states and lower in other groups, proving that there must have been some common influence affecting the vote in large communities. The states can be arranged in groups so as to make this common influence intelligible. They naturally fall into four communities, namely: the Eastern, the Middle, the Southern and the Western. The Eastern group includes Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland. The Middle group takes in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Kentucky and West Virginia. The last three states in this group are generally classed as Southern States; but, as an energetic campaign was conducted in each of them, and as they are contiguous to the other Middle States, they more naturally fall into that group. The Southern

TABLE II.

STATE.	POPULATION.	POTENTIAL VOTERS.	ACTUAL VOTE.	PERCENTAGE OF ACTUAL VOTERS.	
				To POPULATION.	To POTEN- TIAL VOTERS.
Alabama . .	1,828,697	389,084	159,583	08.7	41.0
Arkansas . .	1,311,564	296,733	127,839	09.7	43.0
California . .	1,485,053	406,863	303,793	20.5	74.6
Colorado . .	539,700	248,298	221,336	41.0	89.1
Connecticut .	908,355	224,840	180,118	19.0	80.1
Delaware . .	184,735	49,262	41,982	22.7	85.2
Florida . . .	528,542	122,631	39,226	07.4	31.9
Georgia . . .	2,216,331	477,657	122,715	05.5	26.6
Idaho . . . .	161,772	73,801	57,914	35.8	78.4
Illinois . . .	4,821,550	1,167,433	1,131,897	23.4	96.9
Indiana . . .	2,516,462	663,974	664,094	26.3	100.0
Iowa . . . . .	2,231,853	551,074	530,008	23.7	96.1
Kansas . . . .	1,470,495	372,277	353,766	24.1	95.0
Kentucky . .	2,147,174	511,231	468,908	21.8	91.7
Louisiana . .	1,381,625	295,851	69,904	05.0	23.6
Maine . . . . .	694,466	191,310	118,593	17.0	61.9
Maryland . .	1,190,050	290,965	264,511	22.0	90.9
Massachusetts	2,805,346	652,406	414,266	14.7	63.5
Michigan . . .	2,420,982	596,300	544,492	22.4	91.3
Minnesota . .	1,751,394	397,361	316,247	18.0	79.3
Mississippi . .	1,551,270	323,858	59,150	03.8	18.2
Missouri . . .	3,106,665	734,433	683,534	21.6	93.0
Montana . . .	243,329	92,170	63,641	26.1	60.9
Nebraska . . .	1,068,539	270,516	241,433	22.6	89.2
Nevada . . . .	42,335	14,854	10,236	24.1	68.8
New Hampshire	411,588	111,844	92,352	22.4	82.5
New Jersey . .	1,883,669	465,103	401,050	21.2	86.2
New York . . .	7,268,012	1,811,602	1,547,912	21.2	85.9
North Carolina	1,893,810	400,382	291,839	15.4	72.8
North Dakota .	319,146	65,398	57,769	18.1	80.8
Ohio . . . . .	4,157,545	1,079,881	1,040,073	25.0	96.3
Oregon . . . .	413,536	121,622	84,182	20.3	69.2
Pennsylvania .	6,302,115	1,529,916	1,173,210	18.6	76.6
Rhode Island .	428,556	92,145	56,548	13.1	61.3
South Carolina	1,340,316	273,737	50,815	03.7	18.1
South Dakota .	401,570	101,406	96,131	23.9	94.7
Tennessee . .	2,020,616	455,093	271,623	13.4	59.6
Texas . . . . .	3,048,710	687,350	414,138	13.5	60.2
Utah . . . . .	276,749	109,082	92,350	33.3	84.6
Vermont . . . .	343,641	94,406	56,152	16.3	59.4
Virginia . . . .	1,854,184	419,498	264,095	14.2	62.9
Washington . .	518,103	176,225	107,524	20.7	61.0
West Virginia .	958,800	223,831	220,787	23.0	98.6
Wisconsin . . .	2,069,042	460,811	442,894	21.4	96.1
Wyoming . . .	92,531	37,894	24,815	26.8	65.4
Total . . . . .	74,610,523	18,132,408	14,075,345	18.86	77.52

group includes Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas and Tennessee. And the Western group includes

Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, California, Oregon and Washington. The population, the potential vote, the actual vote in the recent election, and the percentage of vote to population and to the potential vote in each of these groups of states appear in the following table :—

TABLE III.

GROUP.	POPULATION.	POTENTIAL VOTE.	ACTUAL VOTE.	PER CENT OF ACTUAL VOTE.	
				TO POPULATION.	TO POTEN- TIAL VOTE.
Eastern . . .	22,420,533	5,513,799	4,346,694	19.3	78.8
Middle . . .	26,181,467	6,386,329	6,042,934	23.0	94.6
Southern . . .	18,975,665	4,141,874	1,970,927	10.3	47.5
Western . . .	7,032,858	2,090,406	1,714,890	24.3	82.7

It is evident that the smallest percentage of votes to population is in the Southern group of states. The reason for this is a matter of common knowledge. In those states there is for all practical purposes only one party, the Democratic. That party has demonstrated its purpose and its ability to carry the elections as long as the negroes possess political rights. There is, consequently, little incentive to the maintenance of an opposition party. In the Southern group of states the Republican party is the merest shell. It is supported almost wholly by the colored voters, and is kept together by the hope of securing Federal offices. This fact has reduced the Republican poll to a nominal figure, has removed the necessity of casting the full Democratic vote and has made elections a mere matter of form. This explains why the proportion of votes to population is so small in the Southern group. And, in this respect, the situation in those states is likely to grow steadily worse so long as present conditions continue.

The next lowest percentage of votes to population is in the Eastern group of states. In the six New England states, all of which are included in this group, the result of the last election was assured two months beforehand. The state elections

in Vermont and Maine, occurring in September, showed unmistakably the drift of public opinion and made a full vote in November improbable. In the five remaining states in this group, only two, New York and Maryland, were contested. In the other three the result was as clearly foreshadowed as it was in the New England states. The lack of popular interest and the low percentage of votes to population can be explained in this way. The largest percentage of actual voters to potential voters is found in the Middle group of states. This is a matter for surprise, as not more than three of them were doubtful. In the others there was only the normal interest in a presidential election, and hence the reserve vote, which only comes out in years of popular excitement, was not expected to show itself. In the last, or Western, group of states the percentage of actual voters to potential voters is larger than in any group except the Middle group. The large ratio of males twenty-one years of age and over in the population of these states will account in part for this fact. The rest is explained by the presence of woman suffrage and by the active interest in that region in the result of the election.

Taking the whole country together, it is found that of the 18,132,408 potential voters, 14,075,345 voted, or 77 per cent, leaving 4,057,063 votes uncast, or a little less than 23 per cent. This is a formidable number, which would prove a profound indifference to the exercise of the suffrage, if there were not ready explanations. But 2,170,947, or more than half of these disabled, indifferent or disfranchised voters, are found in the eleven states grouped as the South. The causes for this abstention from voting in the Southern States are well known, and it is unfair to argue from the situation in that region that a serious indifference to voting exists in the whole country. In the other thirty-four states, which cast 12,104,418 votes, there were only 1,886,116 potential voters who did not go to the polls. This is a comparatively small number, taking all circumstances into consideration, and it shows an encouraging degree of interest in the exercise of the suffrage.

One more comparison may be allowed. It is contained in the following table, which gives the population, the vote and the ratio which the actual vote bears to the population in the leading cities of the country. The potential vote in the cities is omitted, as there is no way of estimating it even approximately.

TABLE IV.

CITIES.	POPULATION.	VOTE.	RATIO OF POPULATION TO VOTERS.
New York . . . .	3,437,202	608,033	5.65
Chicago . . . .	1,698,575	372,451	4.56
Philadelphia . . . .	1,293,697	234,552	5.50
St. Louis . . . .	575,238	124,529	4.61
Boston . . . .	560,892	89,979	6.23
Baltimore . . . .	508,957	112,737	4.51
Cleveland . . . .	381,768	75,950	5.02
Buffalo . . . .	352,387	66,527	5.29
Cincinnati . . . .	325,902	76,671	4.25
San Francisco . . . .	342,782	64,863	5.28
New Orleans . . . .	287,104	22,561	12.72
Indianapolis . . . .	169,164	45,295	3.73

From this table it is apparent that the ratio of votes cast in the cities is not materially larger than in the rural districts—a fact not easily explained, as in the cities the polls can be more easily reached and more vigorous efforts are made to bring out the voters.

This study of the vote cast in the election of last November, with the review of the ebbs and flows in the vote in previous presidential elections, suggests the inquiry whether a more stable interest in the exercise of the suffrage cannot be obtained and maintained. One means to that end, doubtless, would be a simplification in the method of voting. The present system is too complicated and occupies too much time, while the results are unsatisfactory. A perfect system of voting—one which will be rapid, accurate, easily comprehended and free from fraud—has yet to be invented. But some advance has been made in that direction, and a brief consideration of past and present methods may suggest further improvements.

If all men were honest and carried their consciences with them to the ballot box, the *viva voce* method would be the ideal way of voting. No more conspicuous exhibition of civic virtue can be given than the open declaration at the polls by a voter of his choice among parties and candidates; and civic virtue should be cultivated in a republic, where the safety of the government rests largely upon the high character and courage of its citizens. *Viva voce* voting was abandoned, however, mainly because it gave such ample opportunities for corruption and intimidation.

The transition from voting *viva voce* and by a showing of hands to the old-fashioned ticket system, then to the Australian ballot, and now to voting by machines, has been slow and tedious. The small-ticket system, in general use twenty-five years ago, had its virtues and its vices. It gave way to the Australian ballot, a system of voting which came to America from abroad sanctioned by high authority. In favor of this method it can be said that it secures a high degree of secrecy and of freedom from bribery; and, from the intelligence demanded in marking and handling the ballot, it acts in a measure as an educational restriction on the suffrage.

But against the Australian ballot it can be claimed that it is cumbersome, costly and the source of a large number of errors. These errors have decreased somewhat, as the voters have become used to the system, but they were frequent enough in the recent election to cause the loss of many votes. A large number of instances could be cited to illustrate this fact. In Boston about 6300 voters voted for only one presidential elector, because they did not understand how to manipulate the ballot. Nearly double that number in the same city failed to vote for state candidates other than governor for a similar reason. In New York City 1088 citizens lost their vote on presidential electors by failing to mark their ballots correctly, while 2006 ballots were blank as to governor. In Buffalo 1012 persons disfranchised themselves on the whole ballot; while 22,862, or more than one-quarter of the voters, disfranchised themselves on particular

candidates, by attempting to vote split tickets. In Indianapolis about 7500 voters voted for only one candidate on the whole ticket, leaving all the rest blank; and in Connecticut 2134 ballots had to be rejected on account of errors. These are only scattered illustrations, but they show the ease with which mistakes occur with the Australian ballot. If all the votes lost in this way were found and added together, the total would be surprisingly large. When majorities are large, these errors pass unnoticed; but in a close election, such as occurred in 1876, they might cause endless trouble and embarrassment. As an object lesson in the ease with which errors are made, the two following ballots, cast in Boston at a recent election and shown in the *Globe* of that city, are printed:—

For STREET COMMISSIONER. Vote for One.		
JAMES A. BRESNAHAN	28 APPLETON ST. ————— SOCIALIST LABOR	
JOHN P. DORE	40 HOWLAND ST. — DEMOCRATIC CITIZEN NOM. PAPER. REPUBLICAN	X
WILLIAM R. DYER	149 ELIOT ST. ————— DEMOCRATIC SOCIAL NOM. PAPER	
JAMES A. GALLIVAN	93 WEST BROADWAY ————— DEMOCRATIC	

MANY BALLOTS MARKED LIKE THIS WERE THROWN OUT.

For STREET COMMISSIONER. Vote for One.		
JAMES A. BRESNAHAN	28 APPLETON ST. ————— SOCIALIST LABOR	
JOHN P. DORE	40 HOWLAND ST. — DEMOCRATIC CITIZEN NOM. PAPER. REPUBLICAN	
WILLIAM R. DYER	149 ELIOT ST. ————— DEMOCRATIC SOCIAL NOM. PAPER	
JAMES A. GALLIVAN	93 WEST BROADWAY ————— DEMOCRATIC	
		X

SEVERAL HUNDRED BALLOTS MARKED LIKE THIS ONE WERE NOT COUNTED.



When a method of voting is so imperfect as to confuse and disfranchise voters, it is evidently far from being the ideal system. The matter of expense is also an important element in the Australian system, large payments for printing and clerk hire being indispensable at every election. But the strongest argument against the Australian ballot is that it adds to the difficulty of voting, and so acts as a hindrance to the exercise of the suffrage.

It would be hard to explain why the Australian ballot was introduced into this country and received general recognition in advance of the machine method of voting. Machines were invented and used successfully in Scotland for voting many years before the Australian method was thought of, and they ought naturally to have appealed first to the practical, inventive mind of the American people. But, by a freak of fortune, one of the most cumbersome methods of voting which could be contrived—which compels a voter to struggle with a sheet of paper often a yard square, to pick out the candidates for whom he wishes to vote from lists containing from fifty to three hundred names, and to do all this in a confined booth with a poor light—gained an audience first and was generally adopted, and now the slow process of displacing it by another and a better system must be awaited.

Voting by machinery appears to offer a simple, rapid and accurate method, and one reasonably secure against fraud and bribery. One of the strongest arguments, however, in favor of the voting machine is that it suggests a combination from which may be evolved a system of voting simple and attractive to the voter. Used alone, the machine has one of the most obvious defects of the Australian ballot. It does not permit a private inspection of the ballot before going to the polls. This was one merit of the old ticket system. As those tickets were supplied by the different political parties, and were printed and distributed at least a day before election, they could be taken home, carefully inspected and arranged; and then the conscientious voter could go to the polls feeling

satisfied that, so far as human foresight permitted, he was exercising his suffrage privilege as he desired. Neither the Australian ballot nor the voting machine, used alone, offers this advantage. But with a machine at the polls and with a facsimile ballot for private inspection and for preparation as a guide, the voter would be supplied with every facility for careful voting, and at the same time no door would be opened to fraud or bribery. The facsimile ballot should be made to represent precisely the face of the machine, with the names of candidates arranged exactly as the machine will have them on election day, and should contain also a few simple instructions for operating the machine. It should be mailed to every registered voter at least one day before election, so that it could be studied at home, be marked as the voter wished to vote and be taken to the polls as a guide in voting. The secrecy of the ballot would not be violated, and no more opportunity would be offered for bribery than now, as there would be no certainty that the facsimile ballot would be voted as marked. This method would lessen the feeling of uncertainty with which even the most intelligent voter approaches the polls and, by adding to the ease and attractiveness of voting, would tend to increase the exercise of the suffrage.

In addition to the clumsy and inadequate ballot laws, there are other obstructions also which should be removed from the path of the voter. One of these is the practice, which still exists in some states, of demanding the payment of a poll tax as a prerequisite to voting. Why the man who is public-spirited enough to go to the polls and vote should be asked to pay for the privilege of performing his duty as a citizen, while the man who shirks his duty is allowed to save both his time and his money, is an anomaly difficult to account for. To tax the shirker, and not the worker, would seem to be the more equitable rule. Only a practical test can determine what the result of a law placing a tax on the non-voter would be. It is reasonable to suppose that it would act as a spur upon patriotism and as a reminder of duty. The sacrifice of the amount of the tax or the inconvenience of making a

plausible excuse would be more onerous than going to the polls. And every honorable means of influencing men to perform their civic duty should be made use of.

The strongest force, however, towards increasing the exercise of the suffrage is a public sentiment fully informed, sanely healthful and constantly alert. The progress towards such a condition of public sentiment, while not so rapid as could be desired, is marked enough to encourage further effort. It should be remembered that obstacles have been encountered in the past which are not likely to be met in the future politics of this country. It is not probable that so great a dilution of the electorate as has been witnessed in the years gone by will occur again. Immigration may continue large, but the ratio of foreign-born voters to native-born voters is destined steadily to decrease. Then, too, the sudden irruption of a million or more of voters, such as happened when the ex-slaves were enfranchised, will probably not be repeated. In the past these masses of new voters have constituted the chief sources of corruption and of danger to the purity of the ballot. That no more harm resulted than we have actually experienced from these causes is a reason for confidence in the generally healthy condition of the body politic. That the lesson of past mistakes has been learned, is evident from the temper of the public shown in treating the possessions and peoples which came to this country from the war with Spain. No great body of men will in future be endowed with the suffrage before they are prepared for it, whether or not circumstances have made another policy unavoidable in the past. A greater value will be set upon the suffrage privilege; and the more highly it is prized, the more cheerful will become its exercise.

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PHILADELPHIA, PA.